

## “The Dīkṣā Lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura” – argument

In this section, we will refute the claims made on page 86 of a section of the book in question titled, “The Dīkṣā Lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.” In this section of their book the author(s) claim that there is precedence of many female *dīkṣā* gurus in “our *guru-paramparā* line coming from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.” Let us analyze this argument based on guru, *sādhū*, and *śāstra*.

### Going against Śrīla Prabhupāda

On page 41 of the book in question, the author(s) attempt to establish their argument by citing, dozens of historical examples from the Gauḍīya-sampradāya and *dīkṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, to raise a point that if *śāstras* supposedly prohibits FDG’s, then how could a few ladies, in the history of our *sampradāya*, function as *dīkṣā-gurus*? The answer to this question lies in the *Nārada-pāñcarātra Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* verses (1.42 – 1.44 cited before) which harmonize the apparent contradictory statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purports, lectures, letters, and room conversations related to this topic. According to these scriptural injunctions, exalted and perfected female personalities, such as Jhānava mātā, are all rare exceptions and hence can act as *dīkṣā-gurus*.

Whereas the *dīkṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is based on *jāta-gosāis* who practice the *siddha-praṇālī* initiation method, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his guru mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura followed the *śikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, they both forbade their disciples from associating with the *dīkṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, although they respected it from a distance.

<sup>34</sup> *siddha-praṇālī* initiation prevalent in Gauḍīya-aiṣṇava-sampradāya is based on *dīkṣā* lineage. *Śikṣā* lineage is the method given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that is based on *Nārada Pāñcarātra*.

Under this context, what is the relevance of the lady *dīkṣā-gurus* of the *dīkṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to ISKCON? The evidence presented herein is crucial to understanding this point.

Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura took the *siddha-praṇālī* initiation from his father, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and hence he represented his father’s *dīkṣā* lineage.<sup>35</sup> In his letter to Śrīla Lalita Prasad Thakura, dated March 4, 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that he respected Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura as a living representative (the *dīkṣā* lineage) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Śrīla Prabhupāda also once visited him with his disciples to get his celestial blessings. Nonetheless, a few months later, Śrīla Prabhupāda forbade his disciples from taking *śīkṣā* from Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura, as cited below:

My dear Acyutananda! Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated July 18, 1972, and I have noted the contents. One thing is, Śrīman Lalita Prasad Thakura has not ... So I don’t want you to mix with him further. **I have just got one letter from Acarya das, wherein he requests to live with Lalita Prasad Thakura for taking instruction from him. I do not like this idea, I don’t know where these ideas are coming from. No one should go there anymore.** Let Yadubara take his photos as he has taken so much trouble and they may be valuable for the future but **besides Yadubara no one else should go there, and Acarya das should not go there either.** [Letter to: Acyutananda, Dated: July 29, 1972, Amsterdam]

Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed shock and displeasure with the idea of taking spiritual instructions (*śīkṣā*) from Śrīla Lalita Prasād

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35 Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura assiduously practiced and abided by his father’s words strictly, tending to emphasize the non-absolute directives such as those emphasizing the household life. He regarded his father as yet another representative of Bipina Bhāri Gosvāmī’s lineage in which he had taken *dīkṣā*. In this way he differed from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who considered Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as a luminary among *mahā-bhāgavatas* constituting the transparent Gauḍīya *paramparā* spreading unadulterated pure devotional service (*śuddha-bhakti*.) – adapted from *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*, vol 2, page 202, Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, Bhakti Vikāsa Trust.

Ṭhākura representing the *dikṣā* lineage (Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī). Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed surprised that his disciples were even thinking of such ideas and therefore he said, “**No one should go there anymore.**” Is this not an instruction for all ISKCON devotees to not have any association, other than respect from a distance, with the *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura? Yet, we find the author(s) of the book and other pro-FDG campaigners citing the women *dikṣā-gurus* of the *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the precedents for implementing WDG/FDG within ISKCON. Confirmed sources from within the GBC indicate that this was a major talking point of the proponents of WDG/FDG in garnering the support of some of the “fence-sitters,” and that this helped to tilt the scale by enough of a majority votes in favor of FDG implementation at the October 2019 Tirupati MGM GBC meet.

### Caste-gosvāmīs – the author(s) self-defeating argument

Interestingly, on page 91 of the book in contention, the author(s) claim that there were females who acted as *dikṣā-gurus* in the *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and therefore they claim that ISKCON should also follow this precedent. Even though Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave us the *śikṣā-guru-paramparā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to follow and not his *dikṣā-guru-paramparā*, the author(s) insist on following the precedence in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā* line. Furthermore, *śikṣā-guru-paramparā*, also known as *Bhāgavta-paramparā* establishes our link to Lord Caitanya’s *paramaparā* via the *śikṣā* system of initiations based on the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *śikṣā* lineage. We find not a single mention of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā-guru-paramparā* in the gamut of teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Using expert juggling of words to deconstruct the SB 4.12.32 purport, the author(s), on the one hand, argued that Sunīti is disqualified from being Dhruva Mahārāja’s *dikṣā-guru* due to her family relationship as his mother, not her gender. On the

other hand, in the lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the female gurus became *dikṣā-gurus* based on family relationships. Yet, contradictory to their previous objections, the author(s) claim these family-based female *dikṣā-gurus* as a valid precedence for the implementation of the FDG within ISKCON.

Hence, the author(s) are two-faced and ill logical in their reasoning. Given the fact that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself adopted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *śikṣā* lineage, there is no way for devotees of ISKCON to adopt Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā* lineage as precedence without leaving the shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *śikṣā* lineage. Despite this, if one is desperate to become a female *dikṣā-guru*, citing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā* lineage as precedence, then they should seek shelter in Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura or his lineage at the risk of the withdrawal of the shelter from Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Nevertheless, on the account of low caste birth, specifically in the case of western born devotees, and on the account of the lack of seminal relationship, the *jāta-gosāi* or caste and family relationship based *dikṣā* system of Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā* lineage would deny shelter to these ISKCON members wishing to become female-gurus. Thence these FDG adherents would be stranded bereft of any spiritual status, akin to a brahmaṇa who lost his caste in exchange for a meal from a Śūdra or an outcaste and later on ended up starving due to not getting a full meal.

### **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī**

On page 96 of the book under scrutiny, the author(s) claim that just because Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rejected Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī, it does not nullify the validity of earlier FDGs of that paramparā.

Even accepting – purely for argument’s sake – that there was something seriously wrong with Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī,

the question remains: How could his disqualifications filter backward in time to the previous *dikṣā-gurus* in his line (including the three ladies) and disqualify the whole parivāra?

– page 96

The above-mentioned statement is one of the common and popular arguments used by various devotees with a pronounced pro-FDG stand. This is particularly with respect to the controversy surrounding Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rejecting Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī (and vice versa). Even if the break in the *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura does not filter backward to render the female *dikṣā-gurus* of that *paramparā* bogus, those female *dikṣā-gurus* do not constitute precedence for ISKCON because ISKCON devotees follow Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, not Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura.

As per *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2 and 4.3, when a link in the chain breaks the *paramparā* breaks and Lord Kṛṣṇa will re-establish the link through His pure devotee. Hence, for the followers of ISKCON that pure devotee chosen by the Lord is Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who reestablished the *Gauḍīya-śikṣa-paramparā* and *mārga-darśana* (the spiritual roadmap) coming from Śrīla Jagannath Das Babaji through Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Moreover, the *dikṣā-paramparā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura practiced the *siddha-praṇālī dikṣā* process and not the process based on the *Nārada-pāñcarātra* given to us by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Irrespective of whether the disqualifications filter backward or not, we have to accept the *mārga-darśana* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as shown to us by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda and refrain from straying from this path to seek precedence in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *dikṣā* lineage and mix and match philosophies or initiation processes just to implement FDG's based on a political agenda.

## Siddha-praṇālī and Caste Gosvāmīs

The controversial *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī’s line, differs from that of ISKCON because the former follows the *siddha-praṇālī* process of *dikṣā* and the latter follows the *Nārada-pāñcarātra* system. Hence, as explained before, if we were to claim precedence for FDG based on *dikṣā* lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, then that FDG *dikṣā* lineage must adopt *siddha-praṇālī* and cannot mix and match with the existing *Nārada-pāñcarātra* system of *paramparā*. Now we proceed to conduct a brief study in order to ascertain whether or not the *siddha-praṇālī* method of initiation is applicable to ISKCON devotees.

The disciplic succession chart titled, “Bhaktivinoda’s *siddha-praṇālī* chart in English,”<sup>36</sup> explains that the *dikṣā* succession is a *siddha-praṇālī* succession. But anyone who is a staunch follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda “as it is” without deviating or interpreting his teachings must accept his verdict from Nectar of Devotion (chapter 16) on *siddha-praṇālī*, as it is, as cited below:

The *siddha-praṇālī* process is followed by a class of men who are not very authorized and who have manufactured their own way of devotional service. They imagine that they have become associates of the Lord simply by thinking of themselves like that. This external behavior is not at all according to the regulative principles. The so-called *siddha-praṇālī* process is followed by the *prakṛta-sahajīya*, a pseudosect of so-called Vaiṣṇavas. In the opinion of Rūpa Gosvāmī, such activities are simply disturbances to the standard way of devotional service. (NOD 16)

Now, some will point out that this chart was originally made in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s handwriting. Nevertheless, we have to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions contained in his books, and hence we cannot align with the *siddha-praṇālī* method as that was not recommended by our Founder-Ācārya.

36 Available for viewing: <https://guru-sadhu-sastra.blogspot.com/>

However, **for argument's sake**, even if one accepts *siddha-praṇāli* as bonafide, for the following reasons the system of initiation does not apply to followers of ISKCON:

1. For *siddha-praṇāli dikṣā*: The guru reveals disciple's *siddha-svarūpa* (original spiritual identity) to him. The disciple henceforward performs *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Thus, the disciple needs to be at least on *rāgānugā* platform. The guru must be on platform of *prema*, which is obvious because he would have to have the spiritual vision to be able to perceive his own spiritual form in addition to ascertaining the spiritual form, characteristics and eternal service of his disciple in the spiritual realm.
2. In ISKCON those who are initiated are officially entering *vaidhi bhakti* to take shelter of the Lord's Holy name and perform deity worship according to regulative principles. They are not taught to start meditating on their eternal *svarūpa* nor perform *rāgānugā bhakti*.
3. ISKCON's initiation process is *pañca-saṁskāra*<sup>37</sup> based on *nārada-pāñcarātri-kī-vidhi*, and not *siddha-praṇāli*.
4. If we implement FDG claiming the precedence of female gurus of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *dikṣā-paramparā*, then those FDGs and their descendants have to depend on *siddha-praṇāli*. But followers of ISKCON cannot depend on *siddha-praṇāli* because: a) It was not established nor propagated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda. b) It does not apply to *vaidhi-bhakti* followers.<sup>38</sup> c) ISKCON's process is sufficient even for the advancement of *rāgānugā* devotees, and it will take them to the level of *prema*.
5. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established this process that they called "*namāśraya*"<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> See introductory sections for definition of the term *pañca-saṁskāra*.

<sup>38</sup> Devotees who follow the path of *vaidhi-bhakti* or the path of *bhakti* based on *vaidika* or *nārada-pāñcarātri-kī-vidhi*.

<sup>39</sup> Process of surrender to the Lotus Feet of the Lord by exclusive chanting of His Holy Name.



in line with the Six Gosvāmīs, who have all fully based it on *guru-sādhu-śāstra*; while *siddha-praṇāli* is not found in the writings of our *ācāryas* coming in the Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s *śikṣā-guru-paramparā*, or *Bhāgavta-paramparā* established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Even if we accept Śrīla Ṭhākura’s *dikṣā*-lineage as bonafide, the female gurus would have had to have been on the level of *prema* to have given *siddha-praṇāli dikṣā*. The author(s) argue as below:

Even if someone could find something objectionable about him [Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī] that wouldn’t delegitimize his whole lineage. [p 96]

This strategy or line of argument of the author(s) is simply *aśāstriya*, a concoction not based on *śāstra*: thence, in due course of time (*sa kāleneha mahatā*), it will lead to the loss of the spiritual link (*yogo naṣṭaḥ*).

As adherents of the *siddha-praṇāli* system the lady *dikṣā-gurus* in that system certainly would have to have been *siddhas* themselves, which is anyways compatible with the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*’s requirement that ladies be *siddha* (NP-BS 1.44) to give *dikṣā*. Why is it not a requirement for men to be *siddha* but it is required of females? The answer is that 1) females cannot overcome their gender differences (*liṅga-bhedam*); 2) they cannot violate their *stri-dharma* unless they are *siddhās*; 3) most importantly they are always dependant on their protectors and hence are not independent, an absolute requirement for becoming *dikṣā-gurus*.

Some argue that the *siddha-svarūpa* revelation is a gradual process in which the guru awards *siddha-praṇāli* to a disciple only after consulting with the disciple regarding the disciple’s preferred relationship with Kṛṣṇa and specific type of service the disciple is attracted to. Therefore, some proponents of FDG contest that the guru need not be a *siddha* himself (herself). But such reasoning arising from a material platform with a material conception and the fact that one considers a guru to be an



ordinary person on a material platform constitutes the offense of *guror-avajña* or disobeying the orders of one's spiritual master.

It should also be noted that some articles published in *The Gauḍīya* magazine, during the lifetime of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura suggest that the disciplic succession of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *dikṣā-guru* was not actually bonafide. In the *Gauḍīya* issue 4.1 (15 August 1925, pages 25-27), the article "*om viṣṇupāda śrī jagannātha*" (Bengali) cites a verse from the Mahābhārata, relevant to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's lineage:

<i>guror apy avaliptasya</i>	<i>kāryākāryam ajānataḥ</i>
<i>utpatha-pratipannasya</i>	<i>parityāgo vidhīyate</i>

A spiritual master who is seen to be inordinately proud, who is not able to distinguish between his prescribed duties and forbidden behavior, and who has strayed from the path of dharma, should be given up. (*Mahābhārata* 5.178.24)

Following the above scriptural injunction and the injunction that one should give up a guru who is inimical to vaiṣṇavas—*vaiṣṇava-vidveṣī cet parityajya eva* (*Bhakti-sandarbhā* 243)—Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura became indifferent to the bad association (*asat-saṅga*) of a particular sense gratifier and took shelter of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, a great personality, a leader amongst *paramahāṁsas*.

Other articles published during the lifetime of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in the *Gauḍīya* (*The Gauḍīya*, 4/42, 12 June 1926-p. 857-8) and *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* ("Vaiṣṇava o Nindaka," *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, 21, 8-9, p. 253) give further support to the idea that the disciplic succession of Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī, a caste-gosvāmī guru, was not bonafide. Indeed, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself declared the caste gosvāmīs as an *apa-sampradāya*.<sup>40</sup>

40 Adapted from, "In Defense of Vaiṣṇava-dikṣā according to Nārada-Pāñcarātra, an initial response to Śrīman Madan Mohan dāsa", Kṛṣṇa-kīrti dāsa, Dāmodara dāsa: <https://tinyurl.com/yppdr8dc>

## **Caste Gosvāmī Precedence – the author(s) recommend *ṛtvikism***

On page 91, under the title, “The Dikṣā Lineage of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura,” the author(s) contend that because Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself took initiation in the *dikṣā* lineage of Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī, that lineage is therefore bonafide, and provides precedence for the introduction of female *dikṣā-gurus* within ISKCON. However, in this section, it will be established based on scriptural evidence that the author(s)’ recommendation to implement FDG’s based on these criteria would render ISKCON a *ṛtvik* style *apa-sampradāya*, or at least a general sort of *apa-sampradāya*. This section will analyze the author(s) proposal on page 91 of their book, as cited below:

Another parivāra with women in it – one of particular interest for ISKCON – is the one from Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in which we find eight men and four ladies:

1. (Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu) Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī, 2. Rāmacandra Gosvāmī, 3. Rājavallabha Gosvāmī, 4. Kesavacandra Gosvāmī, 5. Rudresvara Gosvāmī, 6. Dayārāma Gosvāmī, 7. Maheśvarī Gosvāminī, 8. Guṇa-mañjarī Gosvāminī, 9. Rāmamañjarī Gosvāminī, 10. Yajñeśvara Gosvāmī, 11. Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī (1850-1919), 12. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838-1914) [p 91]

A first look at the above list raises the important question of why Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not include anyone from the above cited *parivāra* in his *guru-paramparā* song, “*krṣṇa hoite catur-mukha...*” Or why Śrīla Prabhupāda did not mention any of the personalities except for Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī in his monumental collection of writings (his books, lectures, letters, and conversations)? More important is the fact that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke heavily against the caste Gosvāmīs, and hence their instructions concerning initiations do not match

with the philosophy of caste or family-based initiations that was propagated by Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī. This is the reason why they did not trace their *guru-paramparā* link via the Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī lineage because of the deviant philosophy and associated practices prevalent in this lineage, thence we cannot use the FDGs in Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī's *dikṣā-paramparā* precedence.

What will the author(s) do? Will they accept the position of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda in this regard, or bypass our immediate gurus and accept the shelter of Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī's *dikṣā* lineage in their fervor to implement FDG's within ISKCON?

Ignoring all the points raised in this book concerning the validity of accepting the practices of Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī's *dikṣā* lineage, ISKCON has implemented the FDG's using the claim of precedence from within broader *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇavism*. As a result, there are now three splinter groups within ISKCON: “*ṛtvik* Śrīla Prabhupāda followers,” “*ṛtvik* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *siddha-praṇālī* followers,” and the actual followers Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON in line with the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In summary, the implementation of the FDG's has rendered those FDG's and their descendants, a variant of bogus *ṛtvikism* and *apa-sampradāya*, due to the following reasons:

1. *apa-sampradāya*: Because our immediate *ācāryas* Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rejected caste/*jāta* based initiation and thence did not list direct connection with Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī's *dikṣā* lineage in their *guru-paramparā* list.
2. Bogus *ṛtvikism*: Whereas ISKCON following Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda did not accept nor adopt *siddha-praṇālī dikṣā*. So, the only way for the female devotees to become *dikṣā-gurus*, is to adopt the bogus system of taking “*siddha-praṇālī ṛtvik*”

initiation from a picture of those who come in the lineage of Bipina Bihārī Gosvāmī’s FDG lineage. Accepting such bogus *ṛtvik* initiation is not a bona fide option, since as shown with evidence before, Śrīla Prabhupāda forbade his disciples from taking instruction, not to mention initiation, from the lineage of Śrīla Lalita Prasād Ṭhākura.<sup>41</sup>

### **Dis-regarding immediate authority**

By advocating for the implementation of FDG’s in ISKCON, the author(s) are indirectly recommending that ISKCON be split apart and eventually become dried up. Implementing this resolution to allow FDG’s within ISKCON will constitute *sādhū-sāstra-guru-ninda*. The following is the list of reasons for concern that movement might be damaged or destroyed due to adopting the author(s)’ recommendation of implementing FDG’s within ISKCON:

### **Jumping over immediate ācāryas – disaster imminent**

As we demonstrated in the previous passages, misusing the *dikṣā* line of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as precedent for FDG’s makes ISKCON not only a heretical institution but also leads to total disintegration. To an outsider knowledgeable in Vedic and vaiṣṇava culture, this will project an image that ISKCON acknowledges *ṛtvikism*, embraces *apa-sampradāyas*, and supports heretical practices. Since the author(s) and their admirers, attempt to dismantle by word jugglery the purport to SB 4.12.32 – containing a direct statement against the validity of women *dikṣā-gurus* – by stating that the purport is not relevant for kali-yuga (and hence not applicable to ISKCON women), they commit serious offenses at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Twisting Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports and conversations alike and disregarding the *Nārada-pāñcarātra*

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41 The prevalent method of some devotees accepting *ṛtvik* initiations before a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda is bogus and not authorized by scriptures. “Guru Issues, Part 14, The Great Ritvik Hoax,” by HH Bhakti Vikasa Swami refutes all such bogus practices in detail – <https://tinyurl.com/mbn9k84m>

verses prohibiting FDG's – just to attain the goal they are attached to – they plunge ISKCON into embracing Buddhist-like path, as stated in the purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya*, 9.49:

According to the Buddhists' fifth principle, Lord Buddha is the only source for the attainment of knowledge. We cannot accept this, for Lord Buddha rejected the principles of the Vedic knowledge. One must accept a principle of standard knowledge because one cannot attain the Absolute Truth simply by intellectual speculation. [Cc *Madhya* 9.49 purport, para 8]

In the same manner, the author(s) accept only selective portions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's words (already explained in the previous sections), and reject Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to SB 4.12.32 as being draconic, descriptive, and out of place, and hence are exemplars of nominal followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Furthermore, for having adopted such mean ways of interpretation and spurious interpolation, they subject themselves to the same fate that is described in the purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi*, 12.73:

In other words, the branches or descendants of Advaita Ācārya who considered Advaita Ācārya the original cause of the devotional creeper, and who thus neglected or disobeyed the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, deprived themselves of the effect of being watered and thus dried up and died. It is further to be understood that not only the misguided descendants of Advaita Ācārya but anyone who has no connection with Caitanya Mahāprabhu — even if he is independently a great sannyāśī, learned scholar, or ascetic — is like a dead branch of a tree."

It has been demonstrated on at least a couple of occasions that while citing or explaining the purports (such as Cc *Ādi* 12.73 and SB 4.12.32) the author(s) made statements that neither align with the words of the *sampradāya ācāryas* nor align with *śāstra-vākyas*. In so doing are the author(s) not committing grave offense of deviating from Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings contained in his books? Some of them claim total adherence

to Śrīla Prabhupāda alone and do not care for *śāstra-vākyas*. Is there not a striking resemblance between this scenario and the scenario of the branches of Advaita Ācārya, who considered Him as the cause for the original devotional creeper, and were destined to cut off and gradually wither away?<sup>42</sup>

Ironically ISKCON, ignoring all these instructions, has ventured away from *śāstric* injunctions to nourish this dangerous weed of FDG to grow unchecked.

### **Western egalitarian ethos – “Trial and Error” method**

On pages 48 – 56, under the title, “The Idea of Women ... Be Rejected,” the author(s), along with the agreement and approval of a senior *sannyāsī* and *dikṣā-guru*, claim that Women *dikṣā-gurus* were approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda and that ISKCON should take the risk instituting this “principle.” Despite citing a handful of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s quotes that are against women’s liberation or feminist egalitarian views, the author(s) want us to believe that Śrīla Prabhupāda endorsed women *dikṣā-gurus* as a policy for ISKCON. Notwithstanding their dubbed versions of the so-called “approved” “order, mandate, and policy,” akin to the ṛtviks claim of a “final order,” of the Founder-Ācārya, they contradict their dubbings, in the conclusion of that section, by proposing that ISKCON adopt this rational calculus on a “trial and error” basis.

As a senior *sannyāsī* and *dikṣā-guru* recently wrote: Let us do a little rational calculus here: 1. If the GBC does not allow Vaishnavis to be gurus, we risk stifling qualified devotees, and we risk destroying our chance of being a major cultural force in the West. 2. If we allow some test cases of Vaishnavi gurus, we risk very little for the simple reason that there is an extremely small number of female candidates. ISKCON has withstood the fall downs of GBC chairmen, BBT Trustees, super high-profile gurus with thousands of disciples. Do we really think that in modern ISKCON with its hundreds and thousands of projects and millions of followers that

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42 See Cc *ādi* 12.66 through 12.73 verse translations and purports.

the possible missteps of one or two lady gurus in a few locations will seriously damage our worldwide movement? Hard to believe. Conclusion: we have, potentially, an enormous amount to gain, and we risk extremely little, by giving this a chance. Simply the risk of stifling and repressing advanced devotees, apart from the damage to our image, should make us act. Are those opposed to Vaishnavi gurus willing to test their theory? I'm willing to test mine. Without a reasonable test, ISKCON will remain divided. Let nature and Krishna show us the way, and let us at least try to do something that may energize our movement and expand its relevance. Given our struggle to regain relevance in the West, let us try.  
– Email dated 11 November 2012, PAMHO text 24334502

We suggest we should avoid hiding behind allegations of feministic influences and should seriously **consider the consequences** of disregarding the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda and of **showing contempt for the sensitivities of the twenty-first century**. (Page 54)

Would any sane person play with the fire? The message contained in the above passage, quoted from page 54 of the book in contention is suggesting us to do the *agni-parīkṣā* (testing purity by fire). The *sannyāsī dikṣā-guru* and the author(s) state that ISKCON is soon going back to square one in term of irrelevance in Western society. If it is true that ISKCON is losing relevance in the Western countries then what would be the rational thing to do? Should we be not praying to Lord Kṛṣṇa to shower his mercy by increasing book distribution and public *hari-nāms* akin to what Śrīla Prabhupāda did during the initial days when he stepped his foot in America? Is there an example from Śrīla Prabhupāda's glorious pastimes of him ever embracing hippy culture to gain relevance for his movement in America?

The author(s) are worried about “showing contempt for the (feminist egalitarian demoniac) sensitivities of the twenty-first century” rather than following Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct instruction given in SB 4.12.32 and destroying Vedic culture. In fact propagating the demoniac culture of the western



ethos under the influence of a concocted “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mandate” has a higher probability of making ISKCON become “IS A CON” for violating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions?

The same senior sannyāsī addressed a Godbrother who had been expressing concerns about allowing women *dīkṣā-gurus*:  
Dear [name withheld]: Please accept my obeisances.  
Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda. With all due respect, I feel you keep trying to problematize simple, clear, resolved issues:  
1. Prabhupāda said several times that all his disciples should be gurus.  
2. Devotees should serve to the best of their abilities.  
3. Most of the educated world will censure us if we deny women the opportunity to serve to their best ability.  
Your repeated calls for more information on what ‘nature’ means, or what modern culture requires, frankly puzzle me. So does the notion that we should never do anything that Prabhupāda did not directly do or enact, even if his words approve it. Granted we must proceed cautiously but the evidence provided to us so far is in fact sufficient to warrant moving forward cautiously.  
– Email dated 26 October 2012, PAMHO text 24260977

The same sannyāsī had also written:

Yes, we have unchanging, eternal principles and practices that Prabhupāda would not change. But there is no reason to believe he would not implement a policy that he already approved and which current circumstances made vital to keep ISKCON relevant to educated Western audiences.  
– Email dated 11 October 2012, PAMHO text 24181530 [Pages 55 and 56]

The “*sannyāsī dīkṣā-guru’s*” argument, from pages 55 and 56 of the book in question, is simply a gas-lighting technique of repeated lies and pretty much a rhetoric which has been already defeated several times. The fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda did mention in his purport to SB 4.12.32 that “being a woman” Sunīti could not become a *dīkṣā-guru* has the final say over all other statements for several reasons. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself

stated that all of his disciples and grand disciples must read from his books and that his books are the basis for his movement. In light of such clear statements of our Founder-Ācārya, found in his books, there is no question of disappointing him by not following the directions given in the purport to SB 4.12.32. The second point about devotees serving according to their nature is only true when nature is determined based on the directions of *śāstra*. There are numerous places wherein Śrīla Prabhupāda has mentioned the nature of the women's body and psychology, and that due to such nature she must never be independent and be always protected by her father, husband, or son. The following is one of those numerous instances in which Śrīla Prabhupāda cautions that the presence of the feminine nature of woman is present at all times irrespective of one's status in spiritual advancement.

The King, of course, was equally affectionate toward both his sons, Uttama and Dhruva, so he had a natural inclination to take Dhruva, as well as Uttama, on his lap. But because of his favoritism towards his queen Suruci, he could not welcome Dhruva Mahārāja, despite his feelings. King Uttānapāda's feeling was understood by Suruci, and therefore with great pride she began to speak about the King's affection for her. This is the nature of woman. **If a woman understands that her husband regards her as a favorite and is especially affectionate to her, she takes undue advantage. These symptoms are visible even in such an elevated society as the family of Svāyambhuva Manu. Therefore it is concluded that the feminine nature of woman is present everywhere.** [SB 4.8.10 purport]

If we consider the conversation with Ātreya Ṛṣi once again, we can observe that Śrīla Prabhupāda was answering the query regarding equality of women with men; whether a woman's statement (asked twice to confirm) should be treated in the same way as we might reject a crazy, unauthorized, and blind man's statement. In this connection, Śrīla Prabhupāda states that the statements of women in general should be rejected with the exception of special female personalities like that of Jāhnavā-

devī. The important point is that the question raised by Ātreya Ṛṣi was in connection with women claiming equal rights and from that perspective should we accept “A woman’s statement?”

Prabhupāda: So a crazy man’s statement is not accepted. Child’s statement, crazy man’s statement, unauthorized person’s statement, blind man’s statement we cannot accept.

Ātreya Ṛṣi: A woman’s statement?

Prabhupāda: Huh?

Ātreya Ṛṣi: A woman’s statement?

Prabhupāda: If a woman is perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness... Just like Jāhnavā-devī, Lord Nityānanda’s wife, she was ācārya. She was ācārya. She was controlling the whole Vaiṣṇava community... – Room conversation – 29 June 1972, San Diego.

It is quite clear that Śrīla Prabhupāda had to fight against the western egalitarian ethos and establish Vedic culture amongst the cultures of the west marred with such secular and atheistic principles. Notwithstanding that on pages 21 and 48–56, the author(s) make their plea for a “trial and error” experiment based on the western demoniac cultural ethos.

What if the GBC reconfirms its stand and, for the third time, sanctions the validity of the principle of women *dikṣā-gurus*? What would we do if we don’t like that decision? Should we keep fighting it till our last breath? Or would it be better to relax, respect the GBC’s judgment and let history take its course? **If having women dikṣā-gurus is good idea – in line with sādhu, śāstra and guru – some good result will come of it. If it isn’t such a good idea, the future will tell; posterity, statistics, the fossil record, revelations through dreams, God... somebody will show it;** and ISKCON can always modify its course.

The western egalitarian system has already been tried and has failed, time and again. The creation of “Krishna West”

has caused and continues to cause more damage to ISKCON because claiming adherence to Krishna West and using their center's (authorized by ISKCON) affiliated resources, some have even conducted same-sex marriages in the name of devotional service. Some "gurus" in ISKCON have openly embraced homosexuals and some have even initiated them knowing that those initiates will continue to break the regulated principle of no illicit sex in the form of homo sex. As a result of the dilution of principles in many ISKCON centers in the west, there are more Deities than devotees at the daily *maṅgala-ārti*. In India, good preaching is happening so why try this and fail for all the reasons listed above. India has implemented the systems based on *śāstra*, and these have worked. Let us try the Indian method of action based on *śāstra* in other countries instead of vice-versa. Ignoring the *śāstric* method and implementing female *dikṣā-gurus* on a trial basis would only deviate ISKCON farther away from Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, possibly to a point of no return.

### **"Protection of Women Argument"**

This section refutes the position of the author(s) stated in their book under the title: "Women Should Be Protected; ... *dikṣā-gurus*." This section is summarized as follows: The book in contention makes the argument that female *dikṣā-gurus* (FDG) can be protected by their male disciples much more than her sons. Equating material protection offered by a son to a mother in the material paradigm to the guru-disciple relationship of the spiritual paradigm is an unheard upstart concept that is dangerous to the fabric of the Vedic society. Through scriptural references it will be shown that such a concept is not only confusing, laughable, preposterous, and anti-Vedic, but is also demoniac (due to being against scriptural injunctions) as stated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.7):

**The demons have now neglected such injunctions, and they think that women should be given as much freedom as men.**

However, this has not improved the social condition of the world. Actually, a woman should be given protection at every stage of life. She should be given protection by the father in her younger days, by the husband in her youth, and by the grownup sons in her old age. This is proper social behavior according to the Manu-saṁhitā. [BG 16.7 purport]

As stated earlier, and to emphasize it further, we have to remember that whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda talked of the protection of women (within ISKCON and in general), he meant being protected by father, husband, or son; in no instance did he say that she can be protected by her disciples. Once again, we see that many senior devotee “endorsers” (as claimed on page 24 of this book) have been let down by the author(s).

### **Is there a Vedic tradition of women as *ācāryas*?**

In the history of the Vedic tradition, woman *ācāryas* are very rare. All *vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas* including *Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇavas* and *Śrī-vaiṣṇavas* practice the *pāñcarātra* system wherein, women, in rare instances, have assumed or been awarded the position of *ācāryas* or initiating spiritual masters. Only in rare cases, exceptional pure devotees of female bodies have assumed the position of an initiating spiritual master. Hence, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his conversations, stated that such exemplary personalities were very rare. In one conversation he said, “Generally, **they do not** become. **In a very special case.** But **Jāhnavā-devī** was accepted as but **she did not declare.**” The words “but **she did not declare,**” clearly indicates that such special cases are not to be broadcast in public, and institutionalizing exceptions to become the rule is not what Śrīla Prabhupāda is instructing us.

At no point in time can women be independent. In one of his lectures on Bg 1.40, Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

That is the basic principle of the Vedic civilization. And to keep the women chaste, it was the function of the responsible father, or, in the absence of father, the elder brother, so **he must get**

the woman, the girl, married. It is compulsory. There was no compulsory for man to marry because a man may remain brahmacārī. By training, he can abstain from sex. **But if woman is not protected very strictly, it is very difficult. It is very difficult.** [BG 1.40]

All *sampradāyās* (*vaiṣṇava* and *smārta*) practice and accept that the role of women, as specified by *strī-dharma*, is to remain as a daughter, wife, or mother and that they must remain protected at all times throughout their lives.

### Woman Mothers or Masters?

Women as wives and mothers do have an important part in Vedic sacrifices performed at home by householders, such as the right to start the sacrificial fire from the coals remaining from the previous day's sacrificial fire. At the same time, her primary role is to prepare the paraphernalia required for cooking *bhoga* for the Lord while the husband engages in the performance of the *yajña*. As stated before, there are times when the wife herself has to perform certain rituals of the sacrifices but the husband performs those on her behalf. The lack of awareness of this Vedic tradition and culture on the part of the author(s) is one of the main causes for their promoting false premises with regards to this subject.

### “Son and Disciple are the same” – refuted

Let us analyze some of the points made on the pages 69 to 72 of the book in question, titled, “Women Should Be Protected; ... *dikṣā-gurus*.”

“Women Should Be Protected; Therefore They Should Not Become Dikṣā-gurus”

The first answer is that disciples and sons are non-different; therefore a woman with disciples would be even more protected.

**There is no difference between putra and chatra.** Putra means son, and chatra means disciple. – Lecture on Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Los Angeles, 8 July 1971 – [p 69]

In the above-cited passage from the book in contention, we find that author(s)’ argument is not only shallow but also sneaky in nature. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words, **“There is no difference between putra and chatra,”** has been taken out of context by the author(s) and is being used by them to support an un-Vedic and unreasonable position. Let us look at the transcription of this lecture (cited below), to determine the context in which Śrīla Prabhupāda said these words:

Karandhara: ... “The Vedas are not known like that. The Vedic knowledge was originally imparted into the heart of Brahmā, the first created living being, and **Brahmā in his turn disseminated the knowledge to his sons and disciples,** who have continued the process down through history.” Prabhupāda: Formerly, the spiritual master, **the disciplic succession, there are two ways.** One is called *śaukra* and another is called *sautra*. *Śaukra* means succession from the seminal. **Just like son.** Son is born by the semina, and the disciple is born by Vedic knowledge. So the one familywise is called *śaukra*. *Śukra* means semina, coming from the *śukra*. And **the other is *sautra*: by hearing.** The spiritual master... In India still there are gotras. Gotras means coming from that great sage. Just like our family belongs to the Gautama gotra. Gautama Ṛṣi, from him the familywise gotra, and similarly disciplic succession is also gotra. **There is no difference between putra and chatra. Putra means son, and chatra means disciple.** Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said, *putrāṁś ca śiṣyāṁś ca*: they are equally treated. **Both of them equally eligible for hereditary rites from the person, either he is son or disciple.**  
– [Lecture on Śrī Īsopaniṣad, 8 July 1971, Los Angeles]

From the above transcription, we find that Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that either a son gotten by seminal fluid or a disciple initiated by the hearing process is eligible to perform the funeral rites or also known as the hereditary rites (*gotra*). This is very specific to who has the hereditary rites to perform the funeral of a male guru – sons begotten by semen versus disciples (*śiṣyaś*) through *paramparā*. This lecture discusses how male gurus



acquire their sons and disciples. The son (*putra*) begotten by semen can accept the teachings of his father and become his disciple (*śiṣya*). At the same time the *śiṣya*, by accepting the spiritual master through the hearing process also becomes his son (*putra*), thereby becomes eligible to perform the hereditary rites which are normally performed only by sons begotten through seminal method. There is no mention of a mother giving birth to a son and neither is the intention of this lecture is to state that women can get protection from the disciples that they initiate nor that women should become *dikṣā-guru* so that their disciples can offer them protection. Yet the author(s) cleverly take Śrīla Prabhupāda's words out of their original context to substantiate their speculation of disciples offering protection to their female gurus.

Considering the vastness of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, it is possible to quote Śrīla Prabhupāda in such a way as to make it appear that he supports atheism, or anything for that matter of fact. In numerous places in his teachings (purport to SB 3.23.1 and other verses) Śrīla Prabhupāda states that the wife is the disciple and the husband is the guru. Applying the author(s)' logic and methodology to those statements, can we state all current male gurus in ISKCON are the husbands of their female disciples? If so, being the "husband" of their female disciples can they rightfully beget children in them? Fudging Śrīla Prabhupāda's words and fabricating baseless logic to satisfy the feminist agenda of making women *dikṣā-gurus* (by hook or by crook) is preposterous.

Protection of women/mothers by the son actually means material protection in terms of bodily conception as stated in Bg 1.40. That is the role of a son to a mother. The son as "*putra*" is responsible for delivering the parents from "*put*" hell. In his purport to SB 3.23.52, Śrīla Prabhupāda states that it is the responsibility of a son to deliver spiritual knowledge to his mother and not mere material relief. Whereas it is not the duty of an initiated disciple to offer protection to his guru in material

terms. Rather the disciple’s responsibility is to humbly submit to the spiritual master and serve as stated in Bg verse 4.34. The idea of being the protector of the guru is absurd since the principle of surrender means *rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsaḥ* – having faith in the protection of the Lord or his representative; guru.

Therefore, on page 69 of their book, the author(s) not only misinterpret Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statement,<sup>43</sup> but also misrepresent him as being a supporter of FDG implementation within ISKCON. Moreover, is it not also an offense to think that a disciple can offer “material” protection to his guru? According to scriptural injunctions the guru, by giving transcendental knowledge, gives the spiritual protection and the disciple is always a recipient of spiritual protection by hearing those instructions and executing them as they are. *dakṣiṇā jñāna-sandēśaḥ*: “Religious remuneration is devotion to the *ācārya* with the purpose of acquiring spiritual instruction,” [SB 11.19.36-39]. This means that when a disciple offers remuneration or donation (or protection of any sort) to his guru, it is not that the guru receives material benefit but it is the disciple who is actually receiving protection in the form of spiritual instructions. Furthermore, even if the author(s) were to argue that a woman guru can receive protection from her disciples as a *dakṣiṇā*, then such arrangements aimed at solving material considerations of protection to women, are purely a material conception of *dakṣiṇā* system and will not yield any spiritual benefit, as stated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in a lecture to Cc *Madhya* 20.125-136, cited below:

This is called *dakṣiṇa* system. *Dakṣiṇa*, *dakṣiṇa* means if you..., he is giving him instruction that “Your house is bounded by east side, west side, north side and south side. So if you go to the south...” South is translated into Sanskrit, *dakṣiṇa*. And *dakṣiṇa* also means giving something to the priest in respect of his service

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43 “the son and disciple are same,” – 8 July 1971 lecture on Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Los Angeles.

for performing rituals. So this is figuratively being used, *dakṣiṇa*. *Dakṣiṇa* means priesthood. If you follow the priesthood, then the result will be that ‘*bhīmarūla-barulī*’ *uṭhibe*, *dhana nā pāibe*: “There are some poisonous insects which will bite you, and you will not be able to dig out the wealth left by your father.”

So this poisonous effect is that the priesthood, they are for business. They will never give you the right thing, not it is in their power. Not it is in their power. That is going on. But if you find out..., if you want to find out the Absolute Truth through this rituals and priesthood, then the result will be that you will be bitten by some poisonous, I mean to say, insect, and your attempt will be unsuccessful.

Hence, the statement, “**therefore a woman with disciples would be even more protected**” is not only not in accordance with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic scriptures, but also a fruitive mentality that is highly discouraged by Lord Caitanaya and all our *ācāryas*. Nevertheless, according to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu one who sees the guru-disciple relationship in material terms becomes a “**bāuliya**” (a type of *apa-sampradāya*) as stated in Cc *Ādi*, verses 12.49 and 12.50 as cited below:

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Kamalākānta, “You are a *bāuliya*, one who does not know things as they are. Why do you act in this way? Why do you invade the privacy of Advaita Ācārya and damage His religious principles? [Cc *Ādi*, 12.49]

“Advaita Ācārya, My spiritual master, should never accept charity from rich men or kings because if a spiritual master accepts money or grains from such materialists his mind becomes polluted. [Cc *Ādi*, 12.50]

Hence Śrīla Prabhupāda’s sentence, “**There is no difference between putra and chatra**,” has been taken out of its context, causing the loss of its deeper imports and tenets.

### “**These are not ordinary women**” – harmonized

The statement, “Śrīla Prabhupāda had said that **these are not ordinary women**. **These are vaiṣṇavīs**, that’s something special, they are not less than their male counterparts,” is a very

famous statement among the rank and file of ISKCON devotees. In their 292-page book, the author(s) very much echo, amplify, and exploit this sentiment in novel ways never before witnessed. Yet, Śrīla Prabhupāda did make it clear that in his movement men and women have different social roles to play, as cited below:

Yogesvara: So here's a problem: The women today want the same rights as men. How can they be satisfied?

Prabhupāda: Everything will be satisfied. Just like our women, Kṛṣṇa conscious, they are working. They don't want equal rights with the men. It is due to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are cleansing the temple, they are cooking very nicely. They are satisfied. They never said that “I have to go to Japan for preaching like Prabhupāda.” They never say. This is artificial. So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means work in his constitutional position. The women, men, when they remain in their constitutional position, there will be no artificial. [May 27, 1974, Rome]

Another conversation recorded on this topic with a third person, a reporter:

Reporter: Are **men superior** in your movement, though?

Prabhupāda: Hm?

Reporter: Are men regarded as superior to women?

Prabhupāda: Yes, naturally. Naturally, woman requires protection by the man. In the childhood she is protected by the father, and youth time she is protected by the husband, and old age she is protected by elderly sons. That is natural. [March 5th, 1975 - New York City]

In the above excerpt from the 1974 morning walk conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda answered a question about women in general with emphasis on “our women, Kṛṣṇa conscious.” Similarly, in the question asked by the reporter, “Are **men superior** in **your movement**,” there is a clear indication that the reporter

was referring to the ISKCON movement. This indicates that both the reporter and Śrīla Prabhupāda were referring to men and women of ISKCON, or *vaiṣṇavas* or *vaiṣṇavīs*, and not just ordinary men and women. Śrīla Prabhupāda had a different idea of roles for women and men in ISKCON, which is in harmony with Vedic culture. Continuing with pages 69 and 70 of the book in question, let us examine the following excerpts:

Śrīla Prabhupāda often stressed that “A woman must always be protected, either by her father, by her husband, or by her elderly son.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.14.38, purport) But **Śrīla Prabhupāda also explained that such instruction mostly applies to an “ordinary woman”:** *So to have good population, the women should be very chaste. . . . But if woman is not protected very strictly, it is very difficult . . . Of course, when woman comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman . . . So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself . . . Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman.* – *Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā* 1.40, London, 28 July 1973 – [p 69, 70]

Here the author(s) are citing a statement from the SB 9.14.38 purport to claim that – what is stated in this purport with respect to protection by father, husband, or elderly son – is applicable only to an “ordinary woman” and not to a Kṛṣṇa conscious woman. To substantiate this statement, they quote a partial (lexical sleight of hand) transcript of a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda on Bhagavad-gītā 1.40, London, 28 July 1973. If we examine the full transcript that contains the statement, we will understand the context as very much specific to Bg 1.40, and does not relate to SB 9.14.38 or its purport in any way. Let us look at both the purports as shown below:

**Because women are easily seduced, the *Manu-saṁhitā* enjoins that they should not be given freedom.** A woman must always be protected, either by her father, by her husband, or by her elderly son. If women are given freedom to mingle with men like equals,

which they now claim to be, they cannot keep their propriety. The nature of a woman, as personally described by Urvaśī, is to establish false friendship with someone and then seek new male companions, one after another, even if this means giving up the company of a sincere well-wisher. [SB 9.14.38 purport]

We see in the above-cited purport to SB 9.14.38, Śrīla Prabhupāda states that the reason that a woman should be protected is to check or curtail her natural tendency of being unable to control her senses. In the purport to Bg 1.40 (relevant portion cited below):

Even *pāpa-yoni*, degraded birth, even women, śūdra and vaiśya, they also can become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious by training. And they can also go back to home, back to Godhead, without any check. **So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself.** So it is spoken... **Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman.** Strīṣu duṣṭāsu. Just like adharma-abhibhava. Adharma. If the woman is trained, a girl is trained from the very beginning that “You should remain chaste,” that is dharma. It is called satītā dharma. Satī means chastity. There are many stories of Satī, chaste woman. Nala-damayantī. His [her] husband became so poverty-stricken. He was king but he became later on so poverty-stricken that he had no sufficient cloth. The husband and wife was putting on the same cloth, half and half. So still, still there was no divorce. You see? Still the woman did not consider... She was also king’s daughter. But the husband has fallen down to so much poverty-stricken condition, “So why shall I live with him?” These are some of the extreme examples of chastity. [Lecture on Bg 1.40]

In this lecture on Bg 1.40, the reason Śrīla Prabhupāda says that **“when a woman comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman,”** is to highlight the facility available for devotee woman, which is not available for ordinary woman, of **going back to home, back to Godhead, without any check.** In no

way is Śrīla Prabhupāda inferring that for a devotee woman, the aspect of protection by a father, husband, or her adult son does not apply as it does to an ordinary woman. This is yet another mistake on the part of the author(s) akin to many similar issues of this nature, as listed in the following sections, and it calls for a serious reconsideration of this book on the part of the author(s). So, what Śrīla Prabhupāda intended here is that a woman who has come to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, be trained in chastity. However, the author(s) cunningly concealed this part of the lecture and tried to establish that Kṛṣṇa conscious women do not need protection. This would mean that they need not marry also, which directly goes against what Śrīla Prabhupāda is establishing here. In the whole lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda untiringly establishes that women need protection; but the author(s) have cleverly truncated other parts of the lecture and presented a few statements stitched together to try and prove the opposite.

Hence, the apparent questionable intent and prejudice on the part of the author(s) brings up for further questions. Are the author(s) not suggesting that one can flout the prescribed rules and regulations of the scriptures merely because of the fact that one is practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness? What is the basis for stating that a women who practices Kṛṣṇa consciousness automatically earns “not ordinary or extra-ordinary” status? Even if this is so, why are only women in ISKCON awarded “not ordinary” status and not the Kṛṣṇa conscious men in ISKCON as well? Moreover, if they are “extra-ordinary,” then why do both males and females in ISKCON fall down? While ISKCON offices take action on males for fall downs should they not make an inquiry into all the peccadilloes of the female devotees as well?<sup>44</sup>

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44 An internet search result yielded information that some prominent ISKCON ladies have potentially been involved in illicit sex, running brothels, have become drug addicts, been involved in satan worship etc. Details are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/s5hufmv2>



## “Can live alone” – refuted

On page 70, the author(s) pull a magic quote out of their hats from a letter Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to a female disciple,<sup>45</sup> as the real, absolute instruction for all women to live alone, and they claim that somehow this statement vetoes all the other thousands of places in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and conversations wherein he has vehemently opposed this idea.

Despite the valid, general recommendations that a woman be protected in all stages in life, Śrīla Prabhupāda also sanctioned that a woman, if capable, at some point “**can live alone**”: *Yes, after the husband retires from family life, the wife can live alone in a sacred place of pilgrimage, like Vrindaban, provided she has got sufficient strength. There is no female sannyas. If the children are favorable, it is better to remain with children. Or, she can live alone after 50 years old, if she is able.*  
– Letter to Malati, 20 July 1968 – [p 70]

Once again, the problem is that such letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda to his disciples (in this case Malati Mātā) are an exception and cannot be used as a precedent that overrides the many other statements that Śrīla Prabhupāda made to the contrary. In this passage, the author(s) ignore 99.9 percent of the instructions regarding the dharma of women contained in the Vedas. They just extracted the phrase “**can live alone**,” and stated that this is the ultimate instruction for the whole world to follow. In this case, it is clear that the letter sent to Malati Mātā, especially the last line, in the above letter excerpt, could be in relation to a specific context unique to her situation. It is strange to quote this letter excerpt in this book that is claimed to have passed through the eyes of numerous scholarly dignitaries. Who will be accountable if even one female devotee experiments with such out of context “**can live alone**” philosophy and later falls down grossly or even breaks away from the society? The author(s) may contest, “Oh! That will never happen!” (See

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<sup>45</sup> The 20 July 1968 letter to Malati mataji was neither traceable in the Vedabase archives software, nor the person incharge could confirm the veracity of this letter in its archives.

footnote link)<sup>46</sup>; we may not be the material body but we still have one, and we should perform our dharma according to our psychophysical nature while simultaneously performing *sādhana-bhakti*. In this case, devotee women should perform *strī-dharma*.

### “Magic ellipses” at work – once again exposed

Continuing with page 70, let us examine the following excerpts:

So to have good population, the women should be very chaste, . . . But if woman is not protected very strictly, it is very difficult . . . Of course, when woman comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman . . . So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself . . . Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman. – Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 1.40, London, 28 July 1973 – [p 70]

The author(s) consistently edit and delete important contextual information – through lexical sleight of hand – combining parts of purports or conversations with “magic ellipses” gives rise to serious doubts in the minds of the readers. Whether it is an unintentional or intentional hijacking of the readers’ thoughts with their narrative will be apparent after the litmus test of comparing the author(s) selected quotations with the original sources. The following is the actual transcription of the portion of a lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda gave on *Bhagavad-gītā* 1.40 (London, 28 July 1973) as cited below, which is also cited in the book in question (emphasis ours):

Therefore even such a great state, USA, the president is being tried and he’s being criticized. So there must be good population. **So to have good population, the women should be very chaste.** That is the basic principle of Vedic civilization. And to

46 In her own testimony, Malati Mata, admits her gross falldown from practices of bhakti during the 15+ years gap while she had left ISKCON. To the surprise of many devotees, upon her return to ISKCON she was made a permanent GBC member.

keep the women chaste, it was the function of the responsible father, or, in the absence of father, the elder brother, so he must get the woman, the girl, married. It is compulsory. There was no compulsory for man to marry because a man may remain brahmacārī. By training, he can abstain from sex. **But if woman is not protected very strictly, it is very difficult. It is very difficult.** Cāṇakya Paṇḍita has... [chuckles] It is not... It is.. We are discussing *śāstra*. Don't think otherwise. [chuckles] Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says, viśvāsaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ strīṣu rāja-kuleṣu ca. Viśvāsaṁ naiva kartavyam: “Don't trust women.” Viśvāsaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ strīṣu. Strīṣu means women. Rāja-kula... And politicians. Yes. Viśvāsaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ strīṣu rāja-kuleṣu ca. Never the trust the politician and woman. **Of course, when woman comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman.** Because Kṛṣṇa says, in another place, striyo vaiśyas tathā śūdraḥ [Bg. 9.32]. They are considered, women, vaiśya, the mercantile community, and śūdra, and the worker class, they are less intelligent. Pāpa-yoni. When the progeny is defective, then they become less intelligent. So Kṛṣṇa says: *mām hi pāṁtha vyapāśrityaye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ striyo vaiśyas tathā śūdras te 'pi yānti param gatiḥ* [Bg. 9.32][O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, vaiśyas [merchants], as well as śūdras [workers]—can approach the supreme destination.] Even pāpa-yoni, degraded birth, even women, śūdra and vaiśya, they also can become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious by training. And they can also go back to home, back to Godhead, without any check. **So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself. So it is spoken... Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman.** Strīṣu duṣṭāsu. Just like adharmā-abhibhava. Adharma. If the woman is trained, a girl is trained from the very beginning that “You should remain chaste,” that is dharma. It is called satītā dharma. Satī means chastity. There are many stories of Satī, chaste woman. Nala-damayantī. His [her] husband became so poverty-stricken. He was king but he became later on so poverty-stricken that he had no sufficient cloth. The husband and wife

was putting on the same cloth, half and half. So still, still there was no divorce. You see? Still the woman did not consider... She was also king's daughter. But the husband has fallen down to so much poverty-stricken condition, "So why shall I live with him?" These are some of the extreme examples of chastity. Not to speak of olden days; I have seen in Bombay, in 1935 or '34, on the roadside, there was a beggar. The beggar, the face was defaced. Might be some accident. His eyes and everything became defaced. He could not see; everything became useless. So he, he was sitting on the roadside, and his wife also, also sitting. But I saw that beggar was neat and clean. The wife was also neat and clean. The wife's business was that to keep the husband always neat and clean and fresh, and bring him there and again take him at home. Young woman. So I could understand that the wife is so chaste. She has not left such ugly husband because his face was defaced. And helping him because they require some money. So we have seen.

As we can see, the author(s) simply extracted sentences (emphasized above) and stitched them together with "magic ellipses" omitting nearly 90 percent of the text from the original lecture that does not play along with their narrative. What could possibly be the intent behind such unscrupulous edits?<sup>47</sup>

In Summary, the role of women in the Vedic tradition is that of a mother and not the master (guru). The collection of *saṁhitās* contained within the *Nārada-pāñcarātra* such as the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* verses (1.13 to 1.15 and 1.37 to 1.44) specify that women of all statuses are eligible to get initiated, but unless situated in the *pratyakṣitātma-nātha* (self-realized) platform, women are not entitled to give initiations or to become *ācāryas*. According to *strī-dharma*, a woman can never be independent and has to be protected by her father before marriage, by her husband after marriage, and by her grown-up son in old age.

47 A prominent chief of staff of SAC has been accused of mal-practices – <https://tinyurl.com/pmfrkp45>

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